

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ROLE PLAY TO IMPROVE EFL
SPEAKING SKILL OF THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS OF
AKADEMI BAHASA ASING BALIKPAPAN**

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Abstract

Speaking is an important skill learned by English student although English covers four skills namely speaking, listening, speaking and writing. Speaking is the main bridge for the students to master English. Unfortunately the fact has shown that the students were quite difficult to improve their speaking skill because they were accustomed to use their native language language in their daily life than using English. The above facts signify that the lecturer should apply the techniques that can motivate students to speak and engage students in encouraging activities. One of the techniques that encourage students to speak is role play. Role play is the choice implemented by the researcher in improving the speaking skill of the first year students at ABA Balikpapan since using role play, the students can express their idea, opinion, and feeling well in their performance without being worried to make mistake. Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that the result of this research was satisfying. This research claims that it was successful in the effort in improving students' English speaking skill through Role-Play. Role-Play activity could increase the students' motivation in joining the teaching and learning activity. Their motivation is reflected in their efforts in preparing the Role-Play.

Key words: implementation, role play, EFL, speaking skill

Abstrak

Speaking adalah ketrampilan penting yang harus dipelajari oleh mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris karena Bahasa Inggris mencakup empat ketrampilan berbahasa yaitu speaking, listening, reading and writing. Speaking adalah jembatan utama bagi mahasiswa untuk menguasai Bahasa Inggris. Sayangnya fakta menunjukkan mahasiswa kesulitan meningkatkan ketrampilan speakingnya karena terbiasa menggunakan bahasa asli mereka dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Fakta diatas membuat dosen berfikir untuk mengaplikasikan teknik belajar yang mampu memotivasi mahasiswa untuk berbicara dalam Bahasa Inggris dan menerapkannya dalam role play (bermain peran).

Role play ini dipilih untuk diterapkan pada mahasiswa ABA Balikpapan di awal tahun karena melalui role play mereka dapat mengungkapkan gagasan, pendapat, dan merasa nyaman tanpa merasa takut membuat kesalahan. Berdasarkan penelitian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahwa hasil penelitian cukup memuaskan. Studi ini dapat dikatakan berhasil karena meningkatkan ketrampilan berbahasa dan meningkatkan motivasi mahasiswa dalam mempersiapkan materi dalam role play mereka.

Kata kunci: *penerapan, bermain peran, EFL, ketrampilan berbicara.*

Background

In Indonesia, English speaking was a quite difficult skill to master because English was the second language. Actually, English speaking was the skill which was good to be learned by people since they were young or kids. However, teaching speaking in English department in many campuses in Balikpapan seemed unproductive. Mostly, Indonesian students were unconfident to speak in English. Many factors cause this. They include untrained lecturer, being lazy, afraid to make mistake, boring class etc.

Speaking was an important skill learned by English student although English covers four skills namely speaking, listening, speaking and writing. Speaking was the main bridge for the students to master English. Speaking has essential part in English teaching-learning process too. In addition, English-speaking skill was used in real life. It was because mastery in English communication was one of the main goals in learning English.

Unfortunately the fact has shown that the students were quite difficult to improve their speaking skill because they were accustomed to use their native language language in their daily life than using English. This was the reason why we can not deny the fact that the students still considered speaking skill as the most difficult skill to be mastered.

Moreover, the reality shows that the teaching of speaking skill seems to have been neglected. It was due to the fact that the evaluation of students, especially the leaving examination, mostly focused on reading comprehension and was presented in the written form; therefore lecturers usually attempt to concentrate the teaching on reading skills. This was done to enable students to pass the examination. The focus given more to reading skills has resulted in the

fact that the students do not have enough exposure to speak and this finally makes them unable to express their ideas in English orally.

The result of a preliminary observation in ABA Balikpapan where the researcher was teaching showed that there were several problems related to teaching of speaking. *First*, the students had low motivation and were passive in the teaching-learning process. It was caused by the students' perception of English and the lecturer monotonous teaching style. *Second*, the students had low speaking skill. They could not produce a simple description of something. It was caused by the monotonous activity which did not encourage the students to speak. *Third*, the students were lack of confidence to communicate in English. This happened because the students felt ashamed if they made mistakes while they were speaking in front of others in a formal class context during the teaching-learning process.

The above facts signify that the lecturer should apply the techniques that can motivate students to speak and engage students in encouraging activities. One of the techniques that encourage students to speak was role play. Role play was the choice implemented by the researcher in improving the speaking skill of the first year students at ABA Balikpapan since using role play, the students can express their idea, opinion, and feeling well in their performance without being worried to make mistake.

Based on the importance of speaking, the strength of role play technique, the researchers' experience, and positive findings of the previous research, the researcher will focus on the implementation of role play to improve the EFL speaking skill of the Second Semester students of ABA Balikpapan.

Concepts and Method

The design employed in this study was classroom action research. The action research implements the cyclical process proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), consists of four steps, namely planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. See Figure 1.

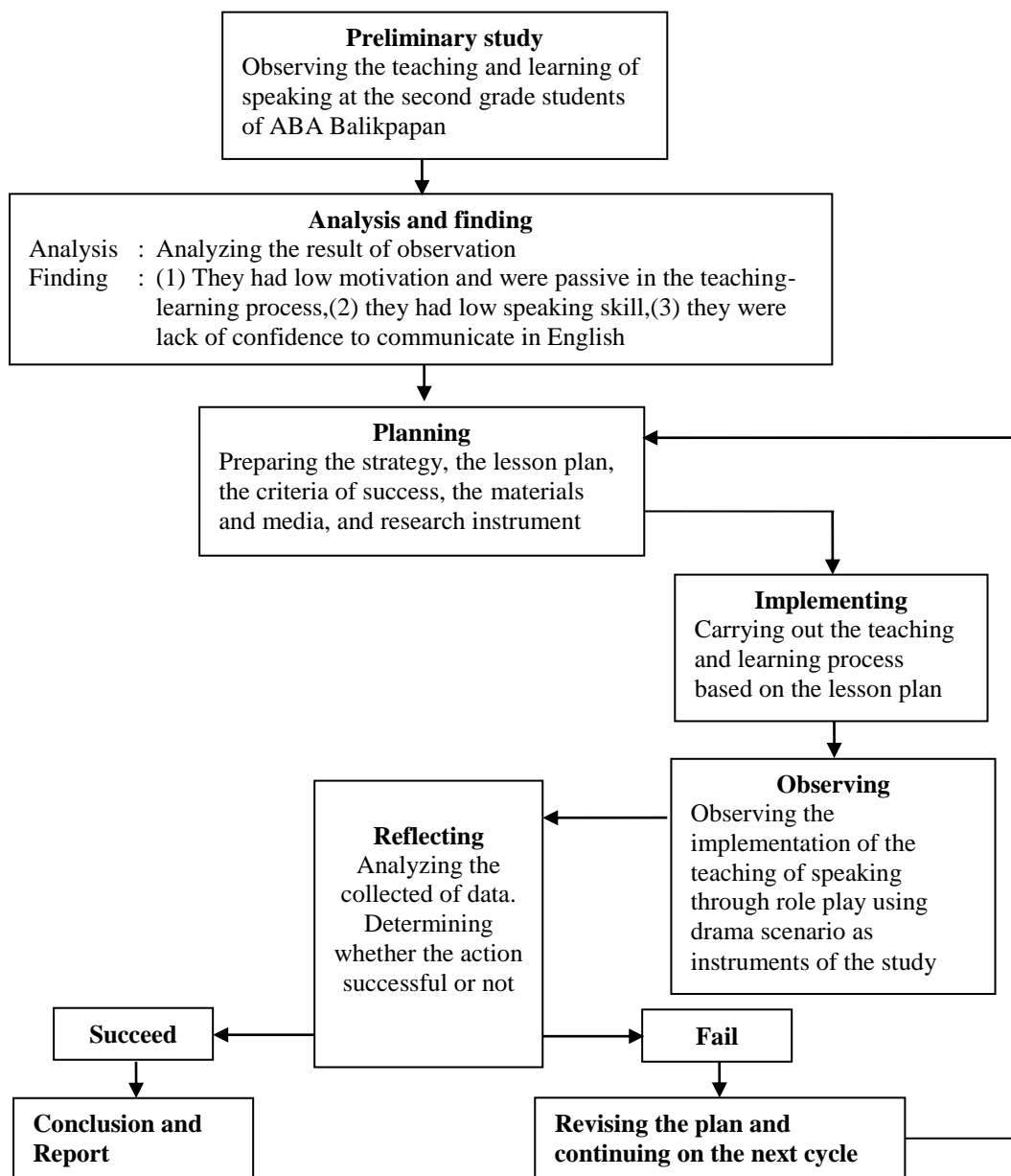


Figure 1 Diagram of the Classroom Action Research Procedure

(adapted from Kemmis and Mc Taggart, 1988). See references.

This research study was conducted at ABA Balikpapan. There was one class for second semester. The reason of choosing this campus as setting was that the researcher was one of the English lecturers there.

The subject of the study was the second semester and as the campus located on Jl. Soekarno Hatta, Straat II, Kelurahan Gunung Samarinda, Balikpapan. The researcher chose second semester and speaking as research subject; because English Speaking was taught in the second semester, and based on the result of the preliminary study, and questionnaire, this class had problems

in learning speaking that must be solved. Dealing with this problem, the researcher would like to implement role play in drama scenario as technique to teach speaking.

On the preliminary study, as usual the researcher taught the students, and brought them into their usual activity for about five minutes to warm up, such as small game. Then they were drilled using substitution, transformation, and functional-situational drills. However, the result was not satisfactory.

After identifying and analyzing those problems, the researcher chose the problem to be solved, that was the speaking skill. The reason of choosing this problem was the lowest score of speaking, the low motivation, and uninteresting classroom atmosphere and monotonous technique.

To overcome this problem, the researcher formulated the problem and arranges a plan which makes the class conducive and lives during the teaching and learning process and improves the students' speaking skill. Planning was the important thing to do before conducting the research. Based on the finding of preliminary study, the researcher and the collaborator made a plan. And the activities were as follows: (1) Preparing the strategy, (2) Designing lesson plan, (3) Preparing criteria of success, and (4) Designing research instrument.

For the teaching and learning activities, the researcher implemented role play in three meetings. And the last was assessment, in this session the researcher uses two kinds of assessments in evaluating the result of the implementation of role play, namely on-going and product assessment.

The on-going assessment was used to know the students' behavior during the process. Here the researcher used observation checklist and field note. Meanwhile product assessment the researcher assesses the students' speaking skill by using analytical scoring rubric proposed by O'Malley and Pierce (1999) as illustrated in Table1. To decide whether the cycle was successful, and whether the researcher needed another cycle or not, the researcher set up the criteria of success which was used as standard of measuring whether or not the students was considered to improve their speaking skill through role play .

To meet the aspect related to the objective, the researcher set up two criteria of success. *The first*, the students' speaking score increased at least the

same or more than the minimum passing standard of the second semester of ABA Balikpapan, that was 65, and it was analyzed based on the scores of the tape-scripts. The tape-scripts were scored by adapting the scale of oral testing criteria proposed by O'Malley and Pierce (1999) as illustrated in Table 1.

The second was the students were highly motivated towards the implementation of role play in the teaching of speaking. It could be indicated by the students were involved in the entire teaching and learning process, for example they could enjoy applying role play, the students were enthusiastic in speaking during the practicing of role play. The data was gained from observation checklist, field note, and questionnaire analysis which were presented in percentage and through their self-assessment sheet in terms of listening to others talking, writing what others said, asking others for information, giving information, giving opinions, asking for and giving clarification, asking in English to the teacher (lecturer), and performing oral report (O'Malley and Pierce, 1999). If the students had positive response of 70 % or over, meant the second criterion was achieved.

Table 1. Analytical Scoring Rubric for Speaking

Language element observed and assessed	Excellent (grade: 5)	Very good (grade: 4)	Good (grade: 3)	Fair (grade: 2)	Poor (grade: 1)
Fluency	Able to speak without any hesitation or break in a sentence.	Hesitates or pauses at a few places in a few sentences but fluency is not seriously affected.	Hesitation is shown in almost every sentence. Ends sentence half-way and then repeats it.	Hesitates a lot that message is not very clear. A lot of repetition of sentences.	Shows a lot of hesitations that speech is not clear.
Grammatical accuracy	Grammar is correct.	A few grammatical errors. Meaning is not affected.	One or two major errors which affect the meaning.	Almost every sentence contains grammatical error.	A lot of grammatical errors are made that meaning of messages is not clear.
Pronunciation	All words are clearly and correctly pronounced	One or two words are incorrectly pronounced but meaning is not affected.	A few words are incorrectly pronounced but meaning is not affected.	One or two words which are mis-pronounced cause meaning to be affected.	Most of the words are incorrectly pronounced

Vocabula-ry	Uses extensive vocabulary.	Uses varied vocabulary.	Uses adequate vocabulary; some word usage irregularities	Uses limited vocabulary.	Uses functional vocabulary.
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Adapted from O'Malley and Pierce (1999), see references

The researcher took the role as practitioner who taught speaking subject, and was helped by a collaborator who observed the practitioner and the effectiveness of role play. The following were the steps of implementation of role play technique:

Pre activity, the researcher introduces the strategy, telling the objective of the study, then showing the video related to the topic. After that He does brain storming by asking the students some questions relate to the topic. Then he tells the students what they have to do. *Whilst activity*, the researcher asked students to make group about ten, the lecturer distributed the card contain the scenario or situation of role play, the students were asked to read it, and ask the question if they do not understand. The lecturer then explains how to make dialog or conversation related to the scenario. After the students understand, he distributes the model of dialog related to the scenario, and asks each group to make conversation then practiced on their own sit; however they were not allowed to memorize the dialogue. Finally the students practice the dialog in front of the class. And the other groups pay attention to their friends' performance. *Post activity*, the researcher gives feedback on the role play's mistakes and mispronunciation, and correcting them. Then he asks what the students' problem during the activities and overcome it. The researcher as lecturer observes the implementation of role play. The observation was done to gain or record data about aspects or events which was occurring during the implementation of the strategy. Meanwhile the collaborator observes the researcher's activities and the student's attitudes during the implementation of role play, by using observation checklist and field notes.

The instruments that were used in conducting research were observation checklist, field notes, and questionnaire.

1. Observation checklist
2. Field note

3. Questionnaire

If one of the criteria of success was not achieved, the researcher and the collaborator analyzes which part of the strategy that causes unsuccessful, the result of error analysis used as consideration of revising, and improving the plan to conduct the next cycle. In addition, if all the criteria of success were fulfilled, means the strategy has worked well. Then the action was stopped.

Findings

Based on the researcher's observation, the fact shows that the students' English speaking skill of the Second Semester students of ABA Balikpapan class in the second semester was not satisfying. They felt shy to express their own oral English competence. They seemed to be in doubt and nervous to express their own oral English. They seldom used English in their daily communication either inside or moreover outside the class and they had no bravery to express their own English competence.

The students' problems stated above were caused by some factors. One of them derives from the lecturer. In this case the lecturer has a very important role to support the students' English speaking skill. In general, the English lecturer doesn't give the proportional time in teaching English speaking skill compared with the other skill such as reading and writing. It might be caused by the allocation time and subject schedule at ABA Balikpapan. The formal test on final test often conducted the test of speaking by using written test format. Hence, the English lecturers tend to ignore the teaching of speaking skill since most of them assume the test of speaking by using written test format. There was an assumption that the successful students can be seen from the result of the Final test. If the students' scores were good, it will be regarded that they were successful, on the other hand if not, it will be regarded that they fail. The above reason causes the English lecturers tend to drill their students with some written exercises continually rather than practice their spoken English. Consequently, most of students tend to be what the researcher has stated before i.e. passive, doubt, shy, nervous, afraid, and not brave in expressing their English competence.

Actually the English lecturer should teach four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing proportionally.

Before implementing the action, the researcher gave the students questionnaire and pre-test dealing with the problem of their English speaking skill. The questionnaire was about the reasons of their reluctance in using English orally. From the result of the questionnaire, the main points which caused the students' reluctance in their using English orally were that they feel afraid, nervous, shy, and unconfident because they do not have good competence in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, etc. Besides, they were afraid to be considered as pompous students. Meanwhile, the result of the pre- test conducted by the researcher and the collaborator indicated that the students who got score of English speaking skill more than or the same as 70, as the minimum required score determined by the English Department, were only 4 students (13.3%), while those who got less than 70 were 26 students (86.7%) from 30 students in that class.

Realizing that most students at ABA Balikpapan in the second semester faced the problem in their English speaking competence, the researcher was eager to hold the research in order to solve the problem. He determined to use Role-Play technique to overcome the problem dealing with the students' English speaking competence. His choosing of the use of Role-Play technique was based on his belief that (1) role play which was based on everyday situation was able to motivate the students because they immediately feel the benefit of the exercises; (2) in role-play, the students have freedom to use what they have learned; (3) role-play can help to bring the language to life and to give the learners some experience of its use as a means of communication; (4) in role-play, the students have freedom to produce their own language which they feel appropriate to the context; (5) in role-play, the students can actively apply knowledge, skills, understanding to successfully speak and act from a different and assigned perspective; (6) role-play was able to engage students in a creative and participatory activity that requires them to apply course concept as they assume fictional identities or envision themselves in unfamiliar situation; and (7)

role-play was one of the communicative techniques which develops fluency, promotes interaction, and increases motivation in the classroom.

The researcher hopes that by applying Role-Play Technique, the Second Semester students of students of ABA Balikpapan class in the second semester were able to improve their English speaking skill and achieve the score of their English speaking skill at least 70 as the minimum required score or '*B*' score.

Findings from Cycle 1

Based on the observation done, the researcher got some important results dealing with the implementation of Role-play activities in cycle 1. There was an improvement on the students' English speaking skill in general, compared with the data obtained from the pre-test score. All five components of speaking skill: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension improve. The summary of the result of the improvement can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. The Result of Statistical Accounts in Cycle 1

Point	Pre-Test Result	Post-Test Result
Lowest	52	64
Highest	84	88
Average	63.67	74.20

The data show that there was an improvement in the average score of the post-test in cycle 1. The average score of pre-test was 63.67, and the average score of post-test in cycle 1 was 74.20. It means that there were 10.53 improvements of the average score. However, the researcher found that the score of their pronunciation and grammar did not improve significantly. It could be caused by the researcher himself. During preparing the role play activity, he did not ask the students about the pronunciation of certain words which were considered difficult. He should also do something to solve the students' problem in grammar. In this case, he needed to ask the students dealing with grammar, then, discuss it with the class. By doing so, the students would have better pronunciation and grammar, and it could make them to be more confident.

In joining the role play activity, most students showed their interest and enthusiasm. However, it does not mean that the researcher did not care a few

students who had less interest and enthusiasm. He would try to approach and motivate them kindly and patiently.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the researcher needed to revise the plan and applied it in the next cycle.

Revision of the Strategy Implemented in Cycle 1

Based on the result of implementation of the action in cycle 1, the researcher made some revisions on the procedure of Role-Play implementation. In this cycle, both the researcher and the collaborator were directly involved in guiding the students during the activity. It was intended to minimize the students' problems in pronunciation and grammar. In addition, the researcher drilled the students the pronunciation of certain words and discussed certain grammars which were considered to be used in applying the role play. The researcher prepared the topic for every type of role play, the task, and designing the lesson plan.

In this cycle the researcher used three types of role play activities namely: Improvising Dialogues, Interviews Based on a Text, and Free Role-Play. In line with the problems found in cycle 1, the implementation of cycle 2 was revised based on the reflection of cycle 1. In cycle 2, the role of lecturer as facilitator was more strengthened. Both the researcher and collaborator were directly involved in guiding the students during the teaching and learning activity.

To minimize the problems, especially on pronunciation and grammar, the lecturer drilled the students according to their problems on certain words pronunciation and discussed the needed grammar in applying the role play. Besides, the researcher didn't forget to approach and give motivation to the students who had less interest and enthusiasm.

Findings from Cycle 2

Based on the data obtained, the researcher got some results dealing with the implementation of role play activities applied in cycle 2. There was an improvement on the students' English speaking skill compared with the data obtained in the pre-test score and the post-test score in cycle 1. If the improvement of pronunciation and grammar in cycle 1 was not significant, it did not happen anymore in cycle 2. In this cycle, all five components of speaking skill: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension improve

evenly. The summary of the result of the improvement can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. The Result of Statistical Accounts in Cycle 2

Point	Pre-Test Result	Post-Test Result
Lowest	52	76
Highest	84	90
Average	63.67	78.34

The data show that the average score in cycle 2 was satisfying. As it can be proved that the average score of the pre-test was 63.67 and the average score of the post-test in cycle 2 was 78.34. It can also be seen that the minimum score gained by the student was 76. It means that the minimum score gained by the student was not less than the Minimum Required Score (*ABA Balikpapan - English Department*) which has been determined by the English Department i.e. 70.

They were not afraid anymore to make mistakes because if they did so, their friends would correct them when they were still preparing the role play. Such condition was able to create stress-free atmosphere since the students felt safer in using their English. When they were still preparing and trying out the role play, they could correct each other if they made mistakes in pronunciation and grammar.

They could help each other in developing and applying new vocabularies. They could also help each other in developing their comprehension, since if the certain student could not comprehend what his/her friends meant, he/she could ask them freely. Since the students often practice their speaking in such activity, gradually they could speak English more fluently. This situation was very beneficial to improve their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Finally, it can be concluded that the implementation of Role-Play activity in cycle 2 brought the success. There was an increase in the number of students who were actively involved in the speaking activity. There was an increase in the average score of speaking skill, and the students got high motivation in their English learning activity. Thus, the action in cycle 2 could be terminated.

Discussion

Considering the result in the two cycles, the researcher discusses some points related to the implementation of Role-Play technique in teaching speaking intended to improve the students' English speaking skill. In this case, the researcher found the strengths as follows.

Role-Play technique was able to create a good, interesting, and challenging class atmosphere. Such atmosphere was very beneficial for students to have more initiative to express their ideas using English orally. This statement was supported by Klippel (1994) that the conducive atmosphere of the class plays an important role in speaking class. By using Role-Play technique, the students were facing the interesting and natural situations in which they were able to interact with their friends without too much inhibition and anxiety. It was also proved by the questionnaire given to the students after the implementation of the Role-Play technique. According to the result of the questionnaire gained by the researcher, all students felt happy and interested in joining the Role-Play activities. Besides, they said that Role-Play activities were challenging and effective in improving their English speaking skill.

Role-Play technique was very suitable for the learners in general, moreover for the children since usually they were motivated to learn by acting the characters of a story or the role of what was taken from the 'real life', such as a doctor, a shop assistant, a policeman, etc. The role which was usually created based on everyday situations was able to motivate the students since they immediately feel the benefit of the exercises. Role-Play technique can be adapted to any levels of proficiencies and any levels of ages, as long as it was adjusted based on the difficulty of the role given and types of the role play.

Role-Play activities provide ample opportunities to practice the students' English in more natural and interactive situations. Since the students have more opportunities in practicing their English, they will be able to improve the components of speaking such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Besides the strengths, however, the researcher also found the weakness during the applying of Role-Play technique. They can be shown in the following description.

Role-Play technique can become uninteresting if the topic was not suitable with the students' interest. That was why the lecturer must be capable in choosing the topic which was considered suitable with the students' interest. It can be stated that teaching speaking using Role-Play technique really gives a high contribution in improving the students' English speaking skill. The strengths have much better effect compared with the weakness.

Conclusion

Role-Play activity could increase the students' motivation in joining the teaching and learning activity. Their motivation was reflected in their efforts in preparing the Role-Play. For instances they asked their friends and also the lecturer about the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and others. They felt that they needed more time than that provided in the class session. The other evidence of the improvement of the students' motivation could be seen from their interest, enthusiasm, and activism in joining the activity. In detail it can be seen in the observation form for students.

The students' problem in their English speaking skill could be successfully solved through Role-Play activity. In general, this can be seen from the comparison between the average score of the pre-test and that of the post-tests.

Recommendations

Realizing that Role-Play technique was very beneficial in improving students' motivation and English speaking skill, some suggestions were proposed for English lecturers, students, and other researchers. In carrying out the teaching learning process, in this case teaching speaking, the lecturer should determine the technique which was able to make students practice their speaking in meaningful context. There were various techniques which were able to make the students express their English orally in meaningful context. One of them was Role-Play technique. Before implementing Role-Play technique, the lecturer should select the appropriate topic to be given to the students by considering the level of students' proficiency as well as the language functions that have been mastered by the students. During the implementation of Role-Play technique, the lecturer should be directly and actively involved in helping students to solve their

problems. Besides, the lecturer should be patient since usually the class becomes little bit noisy.

Many students were passive and reluctant to speak English. They feel shy and nervous to express their own competence when they were supposed to speak English. They seldom use English in their daily communication either inside or outside the class. One of the reasons was they were afraid to make mistakes and their friends laugh at them. To solve this problem, the students can train themselves by using Role-Play. It can be said that the applying of Role-Play technique was successful and satisfying. For other researchers who were interested in conducting a similar study, it was suggested to use the finding of the research as a starting point. However, it must be developed and adjusted with the other condition that might be different.

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